



UGANDA YOUTH NETWORK

APAC DISTRICT PERFORMANCE REPORT

Towards Better Youth Service Delivery in
Community Development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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The opinions expressed in this report are solely those of UYONET and do not necessarily reflect the opinions and policies of our funders.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACAO	Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
ADYN	Apac District Youth Network
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CDD	Community Demand Development
CDO	Community Development Officer
DEO	District Education Officer
DGF	Democracy Governance Facility
FY	Financial Year
GoU	Government of Uganda
LG	Local Government
LGSIP	Local Government Sector Investment Plan
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
RDP	Recreation for Development and Peace Uganda
UYONET	Uganda Youth Network

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy brief presents findings from performance monitoring audits of government programs in Apac district conducted by trained youth monitors. The Uganda Youth Network (UYONET) in partnership with Apac District Youth Network (ADYN) and a team of trained Youth Councillors in Apac District monitored and evaluated government programs in the district specifically focusing on Community Driven Development (CDD) programmes, Youth Livelihood Fund and the Restocking program. The aim is to promote social accountability at local government level in Apac District.

The overall objective of the project was to assess the performance and progress of various government programs being implemented in the district and use the findings to inform Apac District Local Government for appropriate actions to improve the programs. The initiative focused on improving service delivery of CDD program specifically; application process, enterprise selection, fund disbursement, enterprise management and sustainability, how it addresses youth challenges and challenges faced during the CDD implementation for community empowerment. It also looked at the role of CDD projects that are in place and helping in the empowerment of the young people in Apac District.

Under these government projects, groups of between 8 and 15 people were provided financial support to set up small business and agricultural enterprises. These funds were used to implement the following projects, which were monitored: jet car washing, piggery, goat rearing, poultry farming and carpentry among others.

Key activities carried out during the process included sourcing, reviewing and analysing relevant documents concerning CDD funding; using a developed tool to conduct field-monitoring visits and finally Local Government officials, beneficiaries and other community members were met and engaged in focused group discussions to evaluate the programs.

This policy briefing paper therefore synthesizes key emerging issues out of the findings from the CDD programme monitoring and evaluation to inform key stakeholders in Apac District Local Government including Local Government officials (both politicians and civil servants) and the general public.

The brief captures the challenges faced by beneficiaries in implementing programs, as reported by the budget monitors who were trained by UYONET and RDP, as well as highlighting existing policy and implantation gaps that exist. These challenges are recorded here basing on reports submitted by the project monitors as well as findings from ‘town hall’ style meetings with the beneficiaries, youth leaders and district leaders.

Finally, this brief offers a range of recommendations from young people on how to improve the government programs and ensure the sustainability of the different projects set up by youth groups. This policy brief will therefore form the basis for young people’s advocacy towards improved community services delivery and implementation of government programs targeted at the youth in Apac District in general that brings about sustainable development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

The approach of the Government of Uganda to national planning has evolved over the last decade, with reforms of the country's public expenditure management resulting in new institutional arrangements for planning and budgeting. One critical component of these arrangements is the decentralization process, which gives Local Governments discretionary planning and budgeting powers in line with national policies and priorities.¹

Local government in Uganda functions as the immediate point of service delivery for many key services including health, education, agricultural extension, and local infrastructural development. Because of this, the budgeting process forms one of the core development and governance processes at the lower level that provides entry for realistic decision making at the district.

The National Youth Policy defines youth as all young persons; female and male aged 12 to 30 years. According to the National Youth Policy, analysis of the trends on involvement and participation in leadership and decision making since independence shows that youth were mostly marginalized and their involvement is primarily as beneficiaries of programs/services rather than as active participants in the development and decision making process. While the number of youth involved in political and decision making processes has increased in Uganda, much remains to be done to ensure that this participation is more meaningful in terms of increasing levels of informed engagement as well as ensuring that it is effectively translated into better service delivery for youth nationally. Youth views still need to be integrated into budget allocation, planning and monitoring processes.

A good example of this disconnect of youth engagement is the 44bn Youth Venture Capital Fund that was allocated to address youth unemployment in the Financial Year (FY) 2011/12 budget through venture capital funding. While this was originally celebrated, it later resulted in a lot of disgruntlement as a large number of young people failed to meet the minimum requirements to access the money, a problem that might have been avoided if there had been more youth consultation integrated in the planning phase.² There have been a number of other youth focused budget allocations such as the Youth Livelihoods programs among others, but youth participation is still a gaping hole in the budgeting processes even with regard to programs targeted towards their economic empowerment.

Active participation of youth is hinged on their ability to demand for responsive policies and accountability from their leaders. The ability of youth to demand for better service delivery, especially at the local government level, can only be achieved if youth are

1 The **Local Government Act, Cap 243** provides the legal basis for local government budget process. The Act is supported by the Local Government Financial and Accounting Regulations 2007

Promoting Self-Employment Through Entrepreneurship Financing: Lessons From The Uganda Youth Venture Capital Fund, Economic Policy Research Centre, policy brief issue no. 47, June 2014. Accessed at: http://www.eprc.or.ug/pdf_files/Promoting_%20Self-employment_%20through%20entrepreneurship_%20financing_Lessons%20from%20the%20-Uganda%20Youth-Venture%20Capital%20Fund%20PB%2047.pdf

2 Promoting Self-Employment Through Entrepreneurship Financing: Lessons From The Uganda Youth Venture Capital Fund, Economic Policy Research Centre, policy brief issue no. 47, June 2014. Accessed at: http://www.eprc.or.ug/pdf_files/Promoting_%20Self-employment_%20through%20entrepreneurship_%20financing_Lessons%20from%20the%20-Uganda%20Youth-Venture%20Capital%20Fund%20PB%2047.pdf

able to meaningfully participate in all local budgeting processes including planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating. An assessment conducted by the Uganda Youth Network (UYONET) under its 'Ours By Right' project found that one of the biggest impediments to effective youth participation in budget processes at the district is the limited capacity of the youth leaders to research, analyze, negotiate and lobby particularly when it comes to budget decisions.

This indicates that in order to ensure young people are meaningfully involved in the budgeting process both at the national and local government level, they need to be equipped with the necessary skills and tools to monitor and evaluate government budget implementation and offer alternatives to improve effective service delivery at the local level.

Objective of the Assessment

Under the *Program for Youth Democratic Engagement*, currently being implemented by UYONET in Apac district, among others, the objective is to have youth demonstrate capacity to conduct local and national budget monitoring and evaluation as well as advocacy through an institutionalized Youth Budget Advocacy Alliance (YBAA). The project is being implemented in partnership with Recreation for Development and Peace in Uganda (RDP Uganda) and the Apac District Youth Network (ADYN).

The general objectives of the project include;

- i. To strengthen the legislative, research and policy analysis competence of youth leaders in the three project districts so that they are able to engage, create and exploit new and existing opportunities for leadership at the district level through the budgeting process.
- ii. To create a mechanism for sustained political accountability through regional sharing and reflection platforms (youth parliaments) at the national and participating district levels.
- iii. To establish an inclusive platform for Youth Budget Advocacy³ as a prime medium through which young people are able to conduct budget advocacy, monitoring and evaluation.

This report is specifically focused on the views of youth in Apac district; their perspectives of the challenges government programs are facing in Apac and recommendations on how to improve the impact of these programs for youth in the district. The report will contribute to the establishment of a sustainable youth civil society and political leader's budget advocacy alliance that will act as a primary forum to take the lead in collecting and sharing the views of youth and advocate for youth-oriented local and national budgets. The aim of this is to ensure that young peoples' voices on government programs and alternative budget proposals are heard and that government programs increasingly focuses on issues affecting the youth as a critical segment of the population of Uganda.

³ *The Youth leaders Budget Advocacy Alliance is a platform that will bring together young leaders in their diversity to engage and contribute to the budgeting process in Uganda to ensure budgets are responsive to the needs of Young people.*

The alliance is the prime medium through which UYONET is identifying local program and budget issues and putting forward alternative recommendations to policy actors at the national level through the production of district performance reports and briefing papers and engaging in budget dialogues.

Scope of the Assessment

This assessment was conducted in three key districts in Northern Uganda; Apac, Nebbi and Arua. In Apac district, the assessment was specifically conducted in 6 of the 10 Sub Counties of the district and these included; Akokoro, Apac, Inomo, Nambieso, Apac trading center and Aduku center. In each of these Sub Counties, assessment was made on the perceptions of youths on the three selected government program that youth in the district are beneficiaries of – the Youth Livelihoods Program (YLP), Operation Wealth Creation (former NAADS) and similar initiatives under the Community Driven Development (CDD).

Methodology

This study was conducted using qualitative methods of data collection. Primary data was collected using a monitoring tool filled out by the monitors. This was complimented with focused group discussions during the management forum meetings with district officials and secondary data to complement the findings.

The youth monitors conducted budget monitoring at Sub County level. All the youth monitors were equipped with monitoring tools into which they had to feed data collected from their field visits and interviews conducted. The tool specifically collected data on the nature of government programs that were monitored, the allocated budgets, challenges faced, best practices and lessons learnt while implementing the projects.

To be able to do this, UYONET identified and trained youth in Apac in program and budget monitoring.

Targeted youth leaders conducted management Forums at both Sub County and district level. The Management Forums involved the participation of the youth leaders and the sub county/district technical and political leadership, as well as the beneficiaries under the different programs that shared perspectives on the findings from the field visits.

Both, the trainings and processes of conducting budget monitoring and advocacy were aimed at informing the process of developing budget-briefing position papers. The budget briefing papers will provide a range of policy alternatives that can spur socio-economic development in the districts and national level.

This report therefore summarizes the findings of the youth monitors in the district of Apac.

Organization of the Report

This report is presented in four sections. The first section is the introduction – including the background to the assessment and the objectives and scope of the assessment. The second section presents the findings on government programs focusing specifically on

the challenges faced in implementation of government programs assessed – including the challenges as reported by the respondents. The third section outlines the conclusions and recommendations proposed by the assessment team based on the assessment findings. An appendix has been added at the end of the report on the monitoring tool used in collecting the data.

PRESENTATION OF KEY FINDINGS

The Government Community Development Programs Monitored

Apac district is found in Northern Uganda. It has 10 Sub Counties including Abongomole, Apac, Chawente, Nambieso, Aduku, Apac TC, Ibuje, Akokoro, Cegere and Inomo. In its 5year plan, 2010/11-2014/15, the district priorities include; education, health, roads and natural resources among others. Among the government programs the district implements are; NAADS, PRDP, NUSAF II, YLP, and CDD that are aimed at eliminating poverty in the district by supporting economic empowerment of citizens in the districts. The district has high levels of poverty with a high household size of 4.8, which is higher than the national average of 4.7.⁴

The cornerstone of CDD initiatives is the active involvement of members of a defined community in at least some aspects of project design and implementation (Narayan, 2002). While participation can occur at many levels, a key objective is the incorporation of ‘local knowledge’ into the project’s decision-making processes. In Apac district, government under CDD supports a wide range of local development and service delivery needs identified by communities themselves. These include; water supply and sewerage rehabilitation, school and health facilities construction, nutrition programs for mothers and infants, building of rural access roads, and support for livelihoods and microenterprises among others.

Addressing one of the weaknesses of NUSAF I, NUSAF II also supports post-production activities that are closely linked to the project’s productive activities. These include agro-processing enterprises and rural marketing service providers. As part of its targeting strategies, NUSAF II provides special preferences to groups of youth, women (especially widows), physically challenged persons, the elderly, and people with HIV/AIDS. Targeted groups can belong to any of the productive or service sectors supported by the project. Because the NUSAF II uses the CDD approach, beneficiaries are given the chance to choose the kind of activities they want to pursue.

OPC or as it’s still popularly known, NAADS is a 25-year program that the Government of Uganda put in place to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of agricultural extension services. It is a semi-autonomous body formed under the NAADS Act of June 2001, with a mandate to develop a demand-driven, farmer- led agricultural service delivery system targeting the poor subsistence farmers, with emphasis on women, the youth and people with disabilities.⁴ Its development goal is to enhance rural livelihoods by increasing agricultural productivity and profitability in a sustainable manner

⁴ Uganda National Population Census

The Youth Livelihood Program (YLP) is a rolling Government of Uganda Program, targeting the poor and unemployed youth in all the districts in the country. The Program is implemented under the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development (MGLSD). It is financed initially from Government's own resources (with a possibility of development partners' support in the future). The initial budget estimate for the rolling Program is Uganda Shillings 265 billion in the next 5 years. Like a number of the other projects monitored, the YLP supports groups of young people with entrepreneurship training and

Key Challenges Faced by Youth in Program Implementation

The perception on sustainability of government's CDD programs and indeed their ability to foster social cohesion and economic empowerment has been mixed. To a large extent this is a result of short project cycles and insufficient funds disbursed to groups to support the projects. However, there is no doubt that these programs have achieved some success in their reach; this reach can be multiplied if the gaps identified in this report are addressed.

In line with the above, program targets in Apac (made up of youth leaders identified in the beneficiary districts) were financially and technically supported to conduct budget monitoring at Sub County level in the district. The youth leaders underwent training on budget advocacy, Uganda's budget process and the role of youth in the budget process, application of budget analysis techniques using district budgets, budget analysis techniques and the key factors affecting the budget process in Uganda. The Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) conducted these trainings. In total, 32 youth monitors were trained in monitoring, 20 of them were male and 12 were female. And this section highlights the challenges they identified when monitoring the government programs.

Insufficient funds allocated under livelihood programs

In a majority of the cases reported, while the money was able to support procurement of some project inputs, it was insufficient to sustain development and continuity beyond that point. In Aduku Sub-county for example, one group benefited from CDD during FY 2013/2014 with an amount of sh. 4,000,000. The money was used to buy heifers using a procurement process well without the influence of the technocrats. However the money received could cover only 70% of the costs of the project, leaving out veterinary, security and other costs.

Similarly, in Opwonya Mixed Ongika Parish in Ammwak, a group of 15 members including 2 youth received only 40% of the budgeted sh. 10,000,000 for purchase of oxen and ox-ploughs. With insufficient funds, maintaining inputs in most projects was challenge and so a number of projects collapsed without the extra support.

Discrepancy between budgets and actual expenditures

The district monitors were able to access budgets and verify expenditures against budgets. In some instances, monitors observed that items budgeted for were not provided. A community monitor report on Aketo Primary School and its disbursement of UPE Funds, found of the UPE funds received for the school, there were questionable expenditures not in the budget such as sh.100, 000 spent by the DEO's office to get quotations from suppliers. In the same school, a number of scholastic materials budgeted for, worth sh. 71,000 were not received by the school.

Mismanagement and embezzlement of government program funds

The monitors reported different incidents of mismanagement of the CDD funds during implementation of budgets in the district. This was largely by government officials in charge of the programs. In Akokoro Sub County, sh. 4,000,000 meant for the disabled group “Ketngwaloitic” in Ayeolyec parish, for the FY 2013/2014 was found to have been misappropriated by the chairperson LCIII and the “Awila Resolution.” The intended beneficiaries of the fund were thus not properly catered for.

Likewise in Chegere Sub County, it was found that the area Councilor embezzled the CDD fund for the FY 2013/14 in Adem Parish. The Sub County Chief and Community Development Officer (CDO) were also named in the mismanagement of sh. 4,000,000 of CDD funds that was meant to benefit the Canolola community group.

Poor Communication and access to information

There was a communication gap between the technocrats and the community on issues pertaining to government programs. Under the YLP, about 100 youth groups in the district showed interest but they were not sensitized on the terms and conditions governing participation in the project. Many didn’t understand that it was a loan and so went ahead to misappropriate the funds because they did not expect to have to pay it back. Such challenges affected the sustainability and smooth running of the projects right from the start.

Similarly, there were minor problems concerning the government software that was used during the implementation of the programs. The space provided for registration of group names appears to have been too small and some groups were excluded simply because their names were too long. For example in Inomosub county, Olut Produce Youth Buying and Selling Project group did not receive any funding and they were informed that it was because their name was too long to fit into the system. They demonstrated against this at the district headquarters and 3 members of the group were arrested.

There were a few other challenges identified; that the groups lacked knowledge, money given was not enough to sustain their plans, untimely release of funds, poor attitude towards government programs by the community

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are divided into two broad categories, the first being recommendations intended to improve implementation of government projects in general and the second being those intended to improve the management and sustainability of projects by youth beneficiaries.

To improve project implementation

Clarity on funding

There is need to improve and clarify the facilitation and funds released to local governments for CDD project implementation as well as improvement on the lack of adequate facilities to enable project implementation at the local government level. For example, they do not have vehicles and associated facilitation to enable them easily engage with the beneficiary communities and monitor CDD-type sub-projects progress.

Transparency and objectivity in selection and funding of projects

The preparation, approval and funding of projects should be done in accordance with the CDD subprojects operational manuals in each sub county.

The District approval personnel in CDD projects needs to take advantage of communities' willingness, enthusiasm and commitment to the CDD project ideas

Training and sensitization

Communities should be given more training and sensitization to allow them pace up with development dynamics and there is need for proactive sharing of information with key stakeholders by the town council and District Secretariat to reduce mistrust and distortion of the Project objectives.

Scale up information sharing, regular information updates (simplifying and translations where necessary) to ease the information gaps currently being experienced. This should include independent assessment and community perceptions that could be shared through working with the media, through meetings and any other platforms.

Make special consideration of the most vulnerable and marginalized community members in terms of taking up their aspirations, membership requirements, provision of project resources and in decision – making, as they are key targets of CDD interventions.

Realistic expectations

There is need to allocate funds to CDD-type sub-projects on the basis of what can realistically deliver the desired outputs and outcomes. Identified errors and omissions should be addressed to secure full realization of the intended project intentions. Also related to this is the need for inflation to be factored into the CDD-type sub-project budgets at the time of fund release or recall the approved CDD sub- project proposals altogether for revision.

To increase youth participation

Popularize government programs

Translate and popularize key information documents related to CDD sub-projects, for example the CDD sub-projects Operational manual, Monitoring and Control Strategy which will form the basis of bottom-up approach and non-directive method in the implementation of CDD. Most of the issues with youth participation in Apac District revolved around the lack of transparency in the selection of beneficiary groups. Not many of the youth were aware of the government criteria and guidelines during this process and so ended up falling victim to dishonest district officials.

For example, in Ibuje Sub County, Tedero youth group was required to pay 400 thousand shillings as “co-funding” under CDD and no receipts were issued. They later discovered that there was no requirement for cofounding of projects under CDD.

Strict adherence to program guidelines

There should be strict adherence to the CDD and other government program guide lines in order to avoid confusion and frustration among the youth. Strict adherence would also reduce the likelihood of corrupt practices among district officials

Under the Restocking program, the names of beneficiaries were never displayed at the sub counties as required by the guidelines. Youth could not access information on most of these projects and reported that they were not informed of meetings where the projects were discussed.

A committee should be formed to follow up cases of misappropriation of funds under CDD in all sub counties and Police and RDP Uganda should take a lead together with ADYN in following up this cases and ensuring that the money is recovered and the culprits brought to book.

CONCLUSION

The youth empowerment programs were well received in Apac district. However, they have been plagued with issues of embezzlement, misappropriation of funds and general misinformation and confusion. These are all issues that can be managed in the next budget cycle and are therefore not fatal blows to the program. These issues however, proved to be fatal blows to many of the youth projects and should therefore be urgently addressed.

The District leaders in Apac are taking a lead in the attempts to bring district and group leaders who misappropriated funds to book as evidenced in the police cases that have been filed and are being closely followed. Furthermore, the Assistant CAO stated in a focus group discussion that the parish chiefs will now be paid from wage fund as opposed to requiring them to generate their pay through subscription fees, an arrangement which left room for corruption to thrive. These and other government responses are good first steps and signal the District Local Government’s dedication to the success of the government programs in Apac.

The challenges highlighted in this report must be addressed swiftly and holistically as the next budget cycle is fast approaching. The recommenders made by the beneficiaries and youth leaders will be very helpful in this regard and as such should be treated with the seriousness and urgency that they deserve.

ANNEXTURE 1: BUDGET MONITORING REPORTING TOOL

Date: _____

Name: _____

Subcounty: _____

Project No: _____

Project Name				
Budgeted Amount	Actual Funds Released	Amount Spent	Data Source	Reason for Variance (if any)

Challenges: _____

Best Practices: _____

Lessons: _____

Recommendations: _____

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